/21/

192 807 171 From the above chart, we can observe a peculiarity of the Miao language, which is their method of counting numbers. Usually in other languages the numbers beyond ten consist of the sound for ten combined with other numbers. For instance, in Chinese the number eleven is shih-i, which is a combination of the sounds of shih (ten) and i (one); shih-erh (twelve) is a combination of shih (ten) and erh (two), and so on. But the Miao language in Hainan is not like this. Eleven in the Miao language is not pronounced sip à but sip jā; twelve is not pronounced sip ì but sip ngi. This is a notable difference from other languages. Furthermore, there is a peculiarity of the Yao language in Kwangsi. (It is said that this peculiarity is common to all spoken languages of the T'ai people.) This is the reversed sentence construction, in which adjectives are usually put after the nouns instead of before. In the Chinese language we say "blue clothes," "high mountains," and "small chickens"; in the Yao language the word order is usually reversed as in "clothes blue," "mountains high," and "chickens small," etc. (See Report on an Investigation of the Yao of Ling-yün in Kwangsi, p. 26.) I regret that I did not notice whether the Miao of Hainan also had this kind of syntax.

193 171

191 184 The spoken language of the Miao of the different areas in Hainan seems to be lacking in uniformity. The above list is based upon my personal study of the dialect spoken by the Miao of Ang-chi village of Ta-chi in Pao-t'ing district. But according to Hainan Tao Chih /Annals of Hainan Island/, edited by Chen Ming-shu and others, the Miao dialects of Yai district (the present Lo-tung) and Lin-kao district (the present Pai-sha) seem different from that of Ang-chi. Some works are listed below for reference:

4:Mickey E 5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

I found them friendly and hospitable, but without a sense of relative values. The family with whom I lived would accept no money for the rooms, all the rice I could eat, and all the firewood I needed for heating and cooking. In addition, now and then they brought me vegetables from their own gardens, included me in their feasts, and gave me a bit of something special at other times. But, once I began to knit caps for them and give them medicines, prints of individual snapshots, and a treat for the children upon my return from market, they expected me to continue all those things for themselves and all their relatives, even when the war made communications difficult and prices, accordingly, increasingly high.

They were less conventional than the Chinese, though that does not mean that they lacked social standards. For instance, children were repeatedly rebuked when they went between the fire and those who were sitting around it. At feasts it was considered inhospitable should the host or hostess allow a guest's wine bowl to become empty. No guest ever left the village emptyhanded. Men and women, girls and boys mingled freely, for they considered themselves one large family. There was much goodnatured teasing and repartee. Children, however, often gave way to tantrums and some rather heated arguments took place among adults on occasion. One morning some of the older men of the village were discussing something with the old man of our family. Not only did the talking get loud and sarcastic in tone, but some one of them broke a bowl by throwing it onto the stones of the court outside his room. But on the whole the Miao village was a very pleasant place in which to live.

**Language.** Dr. Li Fang-kuei [14] told me that he considers the Miao dialects a distinct language group, belonging to the Sinitic family of languages. They have no written language. My informant, however, declared that the Cowrie Shell Miao speak the ancient Chinse dialect spoken in Kiangsi at the time their ancestor migrated. There are either seven or nine tones — authorities differ as to

[14] At that time acting director of the Section on Philology of the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica.

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?):1947 AE5 Miao AE5

194 this point — including "singing tones" simi-
193 lar to those in the Foochow dialect. The sentence structure differs from modern Chinese. For instance, the adjective always follows the noun. The words are monosyllabic, as in Chinese, but contain sounds not found in modern Chinese, such as one quite similar to the Welsh *ll*. There are, of course, Chinese words for things and ideas brought in through more recent contact with local Chinese.

871 When a family can afford it one or more
177 boys — rarely a girl — receive some education. This must be obtained in a Chinese school whose curriculum offers little of value to the average Miao farmer. Therefore, few

[10a]

from four to six being let into a piece of hollowed wood, the handle of this forming the mouthpiece. The sound, which is something like that of bag-pipes, is produced by brass reeds fixed into the tubes which are of different lengths. Tunes played on these instruments seem weird and monotonous to the Westerner but they play a dangerous part in the life of the young people. When, on moonlight nights, pipers come to the outskirts of a village the music is irresistible to the girls, who go out to the players, and after posture-like dancing and anti-phonal singing spend the night in their company. It is not unheard of for a mother to encourage her own fourteen-year-old daughter to go out to these youths. Human nature can sink very low.

The Miao are yellow-skinned and broad-nosed; they are of short stature and have straight black hair. Occasionally one meets with a boy or girl whose hair is reddish and such children are unpopular. Like the Chinese the Miao language is tonal and mono-syllabic; in every other respect it is entirely different. Happily their language is more easily learnt than Chinese, though the tones are quite as confusing. As an illustration, take a word which we would spell with the letters D and A. Pronounced with what scholars would term an upper even tone "*da*" means "to drag", "to seize"; pronounced with an ascending tone "*da*" means "to kill", with a departing tone "to come", with a lower even tone "to die" or "to kick". It will be readily understood how bewildering such a language can be.

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5



the Black or Dark men, the aborigines of Hainan, is a problem which must be left for some missionary or traveller to solve.

As mentioned above, all the languages spoken in Kweichow are syllabic and tonic, but the Miao language appears to be more like the Chinese or, at all events, more like Mandarin Chinese than those spoken by the Keh-lao, Chung-chia, or I-chia. Naturally in all these languages there are words manifestly borrowed from the Chinese; but leaving out such words, there seem more resemblances between the Chinese and Miao words than between the Chinese and any of the others, or between Miao and any of the others.

Of the non-Chinese languages spoken in Kweichow we know Heh Miao and Chung-chia best, and it is worthy of note that in both of these, as a rule, the adjective comes after the noun, whereas in Chinese the adjective comes before the noun. There are also other marked peculiarities which differentiate these languages from the Chinese and from one another, but for the most part the syntax of all these languages is very much the same, that is to say, there are no conjugations, no declensions, and no inflexion of words. Like Mandarin Chinese, none of the Miao dialects we know have any

7: Clarke M-3 (no date) 1911 AE5 Miao AE5



212 from them the art of writing their own language.

[193] The Miao language, like the Chinese, is syllabic, unencumbered with conjugations or other inflexions, and it would be very easy to represent Miao words by Chinese characters 871 which are not phonetic but ideographic. At the present time there are schools in the Miao villages where Chinese literature is taught. Probably from earliest times there have been some Miao, as there are now, who could read and write Chinese, and yet not one of them, as far as we know, ever attempted to put down their own words in writing. If such an attempt was ever made, it evidently met with no acceptance among the tribesmen, who remain to-day as illiterate as their ancestors in the days of Yao and Shuen.

872 When we opened a school at Panghai some 212 years ago, and offered to teach the scholars to write their own language in the Roman script, the parents would not consent, but wished their children to learn to read and write Chinese. Their way of looking at the matter is not hard to understand. What writing they have to do must be done for them in Chinese. Any Miao 212 who can read and write passably may easily make his living among his neighbours by doing

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5



196 tirteenth day of the seventh moon and there is a similar family meal. The ancestors must be invited to come.

**The first day of the tenth moon.** The ancestors must be invited to come. Biscuits, called *pa pa* in Chinese, are made of rice or some other grain. They are first offered to the ancestors and then they are eaten by the family. No other food or drink is offered or eaten.

**The thirtieth day of the twelfth moon.** At this time the ancestors are welcomed back home. A stone is sometimes heated red hot, then placed outside the front door and water poured on it. Biscuits and tea are offered to the ancestors then wine and later rice and meat, but no vegetables. Beef, pork, and chicken can be used. After these have been offered to the ancestors, there is the usual family meal in which the same things are eaten.

It should be noted that these calendar festivals correspond very closely to those of the Chinese in West China and that the commemorating of and making of offerings to the deceased ancestors is the primary concern in all of them.

## VII. THE LANGUAGE

193 194 The language of the Ch'uan Miao is monosyllabic and tonal. The verb follows the subject and the object the verb, but the adjective follows the noun. Instead of saying the black dog it is customary to say the dog black.

Among the sounds to be distinguished are the aspirate and the nonaspirate, the French *j*, the dental *t*, the nasal *n*, the Welsh *l* and an uvular *g*. An initial *n* or *m* before other consonants is more common than in most other languages. For instance, the word nts'ao means grass and mba means pig. One distinction of sound is nothing else than a stronger emphasis in pronouncing the word or sound. For instance, the word ma meaning have is pronounced with the ordinary stress but the words ma for buy and ma for sell must be pronounced with a greater stress of voice.

It is commonly believed that the language has five tones. The fact is that it has nine tones. The first tone is high, and the voice is kept level. The second tone is the lowest, and is also level. Their difference in tone is about one octave. The third tone begins at one and descends almost to two. The fourth begins at the second and ascends almost to one. The fifth is half-way between one and two and corresponds to the Chinese fifth tone. The sixth begins at five and descends to two. The seventh is about half-way between five and one and is pronounced with a slightly greater stress of voice than the others. The eighth begins at five and ascends to one. The ninth is about half-way between five and two, is level,

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5



and is the most common and difficult to distinguish.[16]

The Chinese language in West China has four tones with five in some localities but in some parts of Fukien, Kwangtung and Kwangsi the language spoken has eight or nine tones. There are Ch'uan Miao legends which indicate that they came to Szechwan from Kwangtung or Kwangsi.

During recent centuries, the Ch'uan Miao language, like their customs, has been greatly influenced by the Chinese. Take, for instance, the comparative and the superlative of adjectives and adverbs. To make the comparative the word xau is spoken before the positive. To make the superlative the word xʌn is spoken after the comparative.

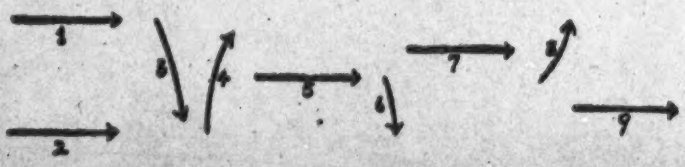
Thus:

| *positive* | | *comparative* | | *superlative* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ʒɔɔ | good | xao ʒɔɔ | better | ʒɔɔ xʌn | best |
| ʂʌu | poor | xao ʂʌu | poorer | ʂʌu xʌn | poorest |
| ju· | small | xao ju· | smaller | ju· xʌn | smallest |
| lo· | large | xao lo· | larger | lo· xʌn | largest |

The word xao is evidently the Chinese word xao 好, *hao* for food which may be used in Chinese in the sense of very and the word xʌn is the Chinese word xʌn 很, *hên* for both the pronunciation and the tones are exactly the same in the Ch'uan Miao and in the Chinese languages. It is significant that the Ch'uan Miao cannot express the comparative and the superlative without the use of Chinese words.

There is a goodly nucleus of Ch'uan Miao words that are non-Chinese and which are to be found in various Miao dialects in Kweichow, Yunnan and even in Tongkin. There are also many words that are evidently of Chinese origin. The Chinese word for chair is $i^3$ *tzu*$^3$ 椅子. The Ch'uan Miao word is $i^2$ tzŭ$^3$ ʒi tsə or i· tsə. The Chinese word for man in Szechwan is zʌn 人 and the Ch'uan Miao word is nʌn. A very common Ch'uan Miao word for love is nia and the Chinese is *ngai* 愛 (*ai*). Occasionally a Chinese word that has been adopted is given a slightly different pronunciation and a different tone.

16. The following diagram may help to distinguish Ch'uan Miao tones.



10: Graham E-5 (1921-?) 1954 AE5 Miao AE5



As we have seen, the deceased ancestors are commemorated by numerous ceremonies in which offerings are made, but the Ch'uan Miao assert that they do not regard ancestors as deities. 769

Among more primitive peoples is found the mana concept, that of a superhuman, supernatural, strange power that is present in unusual persons, deities, and things. Among the Ch'uan Miao this power is assumed but not named or theorized about. It is possessed by gods, godlike creatures, devils, the *do nun* or exorcist, the *mo* or priest, the *bo ntzong* who transforms people into tigers, the ceremonial drum, the *liu sheng*, the ceremonial crossbow, the ceremonial *lin p'ai*, the sword, the seal, etc. There are magic fans by the waving of which battles can be won and other wonders performed, and there are magical charms and incantations possessing this strange power. 789

Tigers, foxes, snakes, banana trees, vines, rats, frogs, cattle, and eels are believed to change into human form and vice versa. Sometimes they change into human form to help people, but often it is to do them harm, and people injured by them must be saved from death by the magician, the *do nun*. 82

The Ch'uan Miao regard all things as alive and sentient. The sun, moon, stars, mountains, rivers, rocks, trees, thunder, the echo, the rainbow, homes, fields, plains, recompense or karma, beds, marriage, swords, the harvest, the year, the *liu sheng*, the ceremonial drum, and even the sound of the ceremonial drum are considered to be living things. Ample evidence of this is found in the stories, and it has often been confirmed to the writer by the Ch'uan Miao themselves.

A year is a living creature with a head like that of a human being. The *liu sheng* is alive, and when played it is regarded as speaking. Ceremonial drums speak when being beaten in the ceremonies. Mountains have heads, feet, hands, eyes, ears, hearts, breasts, veins, and arteries. A plain may be male or female and has a mouth, a heart, arteries, veins, and sinews. The sun and the moon have parents. Rocks and stones are male and female, grow, have offspring, and can speak. Some stones may become immortals. The echo has a deceptive character and can act and speak. Thunder is a living creature, in size and shape like a rooster. It is small but powerful, and its call is the noise of thunder. It has a knife of fire, and when it throws this there is lightning. It is this knife that causes damage when lightning strikes.

The Ch'uan Miao find it natural to say that all things, even those that are inanimate, are alive and have lives, but they find it difficult and less natural to say that inanimate things have souls, although lives are intelligent, active, and have eyes. In some old stories it is stated that people have lives and that the lives are located in the armpits. Are we right or wrong if we call this animatism?

## GRAMMAR AND PRONUNCIATION

The grammar of the Ch'uan Miao in some respects resembles that of the Chinese. It is monosyllabic and tonal. The order of the sentence is subject, predicate, and object, but the object follows the noun and the adverb follows the verb. In the Chinese language there is the aspirate and the nonaspirate, but the Ch'uan Miao have the nonaspirate, the "little aspirate," and the "big aspirate." The big aspirate 194 [193]

[151 cont.]

157 609 the stranger who comes to visit him and who is completely safe under his roof.

The "Méo" women are gay, mirthful, only slightly shy, especially when their confidence has been gained. (One may see in photo 128, Plate 43, a European woman in the midst of a group of "Méotes," who are showing a sometimes indiscreet curiosity regarding all that has to do with the details of costume and of coiffure of strangers from the Occident.)

562 The condition of the "Méo" women is rather hard. They share in the most difficult labor.

836 The young women are not distinguished by an excess of virtue, but this fact is considered of little importance by the "Méo."

526 The young boys and the young men greatly honor exercises of skill and strength and often compete with one another in carrying heavy burdens or in racing over the mountains.

193 [152] The various dialects used by the "Méo" are monosyllabic. As among the "Man-ta-pan" the qualifying word is placed before the noun, the subject before the verb, the direct object after the indirect.

197 It is likely that in their country of origin each "Méo" tribe used a special dialect. Among the tribes settled in Tonkin, who are very much mixed together, the dialects, which are not fixed by any writing, seem to blend together by regions and to be used in each of these regions by all the "Méo" tribes who dwell there.

[198] 212 [871] [648] Almost all the "Méo" use the "kouan-hoa" as the language of commerce. Literate persons are very rare. Those who know a few characters pronounce them in the Chinese fashion. The "Méo" are beginning to send their children to the schools that are being conducted in our frontier posts located at the high altitudes. For their dealings with the authorities and for writing their rare letters, they have recourse to the help of a literate Chinese.

538 [533] The "Méo" have no written literature, but they know narratives, prayers, and some songs, which they sing in a monotonous, sad tone. They show little imagination, much simplicity and sometimes even triviality, for they particularly extol the material joys of life, of the table, and of love, the sole pleasures of a race whose

39: Bernatzik--601 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand
Miao AE5

/444 cont./

144 174 the following general conclusion: "From an anthropological standpoint, the homeland and the linguistic relationships lead to the assumption that here it is a matter of another, second part of the Central Sinoids -- a second part besides the Thai -- which, in the eastern mountains of Central China, poured over or pushed out the older Mon-Khmer Paleo-Mongolians similar to the way that this happened in the western part through the Central Sinoid Thai."

/445/

## Chapter 28

## Language

193 114 197 The language of the Meau is a monosyllabic tone language with five different tones. The best expert on it, P. P. Savina (1),

1. II, p. 168.

writes concerning the language of the Meau that it is spoken with the nose as well as with the mouth and that it differs from all other languages. Marabail (2), too, stresses the independence

2. Page 131.

of the "dialect" of the Meau. Savina emphasizes its dissimilarity in relation to the languages of the Lolo, Chinese, Annamese, Tho, and Yau /Yao/. Seidenfaden (3), on the other hand, doubts

3. II. p. 198.

the dissimilarity of the languages of the Meau and Yau, just as the Census of Burma (4), in direct opposition to Savina,

4. Vol. XI, Part I, p. 200.

classifies the Meau language with the "Man Group," which

AKha A04
Miao AE5

M 114 197 /446 cont./ any rate, more closely related to each other than, say, to the Chinese or Thai, though, undoubtedly, here, too, there are deeper connections. Usually, the linguists solved this dilemma by regarding the Meau-Man group as an independent group next to the Chinese, Thai, and Mon-Khmer.

M 114 193 /447/ Seidenfaden (1) goes into the grammatical structure

1. II, p. 198.

of the language in greater detail. According to him, the various nouns do not have any gender and are not declined by time, mode, or number. In a sentence, the subject comes before the verb and the object after it, the adjective after the substantive and the adverb after the verb to which it relates. More information concerning the language can be found in Savina's work (2)

M 114 192

2. II, pp. XIX-69.

and in his dictionaries already mentioned. Of special interest is his comparative word list, pp. 42 and 43, which gives expressions in the Meau, Man, Lolo, Thai, Annamese, Tibetan, Tatar, Malay, and Stieng. In this connection a reference should be made to my comparative word list of the kinship terms of the Meau, Akha, Lisu, Lahuna, Lahusi, Biet, Dŏeray /Jarai/, Radé /Radhe/, Karen, Lao, and South Thailand languages.

A 197 114 The language of the Akha has been provisionally classified by Lowis (3) in the "Lisu Subgroup" of the "Burman Group."

3. I, p. 85.

The Linguistic Survey of India (4) follows him and regards the

4. Pages 382 ff.

language of the Akha as related to the Lahu and Lihsaw (Lisu),